

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

2006 – 2011 Draft Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Delta is a fragile ecosystem that serves as a vital natural resource and hub of economic activity. The Delta Protection Act of 1992 (Act) is intended to protect and enhance the Delta's resources as provided for in the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta (Regional Plan). The strategic plan is a product of the Delta Protection Commission's (Commission) visioning process, which is meant to further implement the Regional Plan.

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OVERVIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The purpose of the Commission is to protect, preserve and enhance the Delta as it exists today serving multiple functions, including, but not limited to:

- agricultural land preservation
- habitat protection
- enhancing recreational opportunities

Opportunities for achieving the above purposes include:

- infrastructure bond funding
- grants
- collaborate with relevant local, state, federal, and private sector entities
- participate in Delta visioning
- propose legislation to expand Commission representation and enhance effectiveness.

Threats to the above include:

- insufficient levee integrity (including subsidence)
- proximity to seismic fault zones
- population growth and increased demands on all infrastructure elements of the Delta
- potential increase in water supply demands for 23 million plus Californians
- urban encroachment in the primary and secondary zones
- market pressures on agribusiness i.e., conversion of ag land to non-agriculture uses
- insufficient integrated regional planning and implementation
- disputes over public access
- environmental influences such as invasion of non-native species in the waterways, rising ocean levels, water quality issues etc.
- greater need for Commission stewardship and social responsibility (e.g., abandoned vessels, dumping and pollution)

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Vision:

The Delta in the year 2011 is a dynamic and living system.

Health Indicators for the Delta:

- An integrated approach to water, land use and resource management planning sufficient to protect, maintain, enhance and restore the cultural and economic sustainability of residents, businesses, agricultural and recreational interests consistent with a healthy ecosystem
- Sufficient flood protection (e.g., levee maintenance and improvement, and subsidence mitigation) for residential, commercial, agricultural and public infrastructure
- Sufficient fresh water flow and water quality in and through the Delta to meet the needs of Delta water users (residential, commercial and agricultural), recreation, habitat preservation and water quality.

Mission:

To protect, maintain, and where possible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the Delta environment consistent with the Delta Protection Act and the Regional Plan, including, but not limited to agriculture, wildlife habitat and recreational activities; to assure orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources and improved flood protection.

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Program Strategy: *Fully implement the Act.*

1.) Effectively integrate the Delta Regional Land Use and Resource Management Plan into local government general plans.

- Work proactively with local planning departments to ensure full integration of the Regional Plan into general plans.

2.) Act as the appeal body for inconsistencies between general plans and the Regional Plan.

3.) Implement the Regional Plan on a prioritized basis and consistent with the Act.

- Develop and implement annual work plans that target implementation needs flexibly and in partnership with stakeholders.

4.) Participate actively in the development of a long-range Delta-wide vision and management plan in which the Regional Plan would be included.

5.) Initiate a proactive approach to collaborative participation in legislative and regulatory efforts so that the Commission's influence is represented in all discussions of proposed relevant legislation and regulatory change.

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Funding Strategy: *Fully develop funding strategies permitted under the Act.*

- 1.) Continue to receive funds as designated under the Act.
 - Submit a Budget Change Proposal in 2006 – 2007 to make budget whole for 2007 – 2008.
- 2.) Maximize funding allowable under the Act.
 - Apply for grants
 - Pursue bond opportunities
 - Consider member contributions for specific activities and tasks
 - Receive other financial support as permitted by the Act, such as gifts, donations, rents, royalties, and other financial support from private sources
- 3.) Efficiently manage the Commission's resources.
 - Streamline Budget Unit components.
- 4.) Participate in collaborative efforts to develop funding strategies that account for the economic benefits and costs of achieving the Commission's vision of the Delta
- 5.) Promote strategies for the funding, acquisition, and maintenance of voluntary cooperative arrangements, such as conservation easements between property owners and conservation groups that protect wildlife habitat and agricultural land, while not impairing the integrity of infrastructure, including levees.

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Leadership Strategy: *Develop and maintain the partnership between Commission and staff.*

1.) Ensure a well-informed and effective membership body of Commissioners that reflects the diversity of Delta stakeholders.

- Develop and implement Commissioner orientation program.
- Establish meeting attendance norms and processes.

2.) Hire the best qualified and highest performing staff possible to carry out the responsibilities of the Commission, consistent with the Act, this Strategic Plan and the Administrative Work Plan.

- Evaluate long-term needs for positions and levels of expertise.
- Develop comprehensive human resources policies and implement these consistently for all staff according to State requirements and policies.

Strategic Work Plan Goals for Program Administration

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Goals:

- Recognition as the voice of those that live, work, and play in the Delta, consistent with the Land Use & Resource Management Plan and the Delta Protection Act.
- Become proactive, integral part of local and regional land use and visioning processes.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Develop outreach tools. | |
| Participate on Resources Agency Public Information Team. | |
| Expand on networking opportunities. | |
| Utilize Commissioner staffing resources to enhance networking opportunities. | |

2. BUDGET

Goals:

- Develop Budget Maintenance Program.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for long-term funding sustainability.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Submit Budget Change Proposal for 2006/2007 to make budget whole for 2007/2008. | |
| Streamline Budget Unit Components. | |
| Prepare Budget Program Concept(s) / BCP(s) for 2007/2008. | |
| Develop ratio for considering member contributions for specific activities/tasks. | |

3. STAFFING

Goals:

- Develop comprehensive human resource program, consistent with State requirements and policies.
- Evaluate long-term position expertise and level needs.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Develop and/or update job descriptions for all positions. | |
| Implement process for annual goal development for all positions. | |
| Conduct salary comparison analysis for Executive Director and pursue comparable range of compensation. | |

4. COMMISSIONERS

Goals:

- Develop and implement Commissioner orientation package.
- Enhance Commissioner meeting attendance.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Seek authority to appoint member alternates. | |
| Conduct member interviews to determine focus of orientation package. | |
| Review existing advisory and ad hoc committees to determine if changes are needed to address current tasks / program priorities. | |

5. LEGISLATION

Goals:

- Develop tools for effective influence through legislative authority.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Submit formal bill analyses as part of Secretary for Resources Legislative Program. | |
| Identify areas of federal and State legislation for Commission consideration. | |
| Enhance communication with Resources Agency Legislative Director and Delta Legislators (staff). | |
| Utilize Commissioner staffing resources for legislative tracking. | |

Strategic Work Plan Goals for Implementation of Land Use & Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta

Reader's Note: In this section of the Strategic Work Plan, text in paragraph form is taken from the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta, adopted pursuant to the Delta Protection Act. Text in bullet point form has been added as a result of the visioning process.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND USE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PRIMARY ZONE OF THE DELTA

Goals:

- Complete summary of accomplished policy recommendations cited in the Management Plan.
- Establish priority/timeline for completion of remaining tasks.
- Identify unaddressed areas.
- Develop tools for proactive “integration” of Management Plan into local general plans and planning resources resulting in a positive rather than adversarial image for the Commission.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Track project proposals in the Primary Zone with an early intervention approach. | |
| Develop checklist for local entities. | |
| Play an integral role in assuring stakeholder input into Delta Visioning processes. | |
| Initiate process to collect input to develop an annual survey of land use changes and growth pressures within the Delta Primary and Secondary Zones, relevant to the Act and Management | |
| Pursue authority to amend the Management Plan, if determined by the Commission to be needed pursuant to review of accomplishments and identification of unaddressed areas required to comply with the Act. | |

2. ENVIRONMENT

Goals: Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Delta, including soils. Promote protection of remnants of riparian habitat. Promote seasonal flooding and agriculture practices on agricultural lands to maximize wildlife use of the hundreds of thousands of acres of lands in the Delta. Promote levee maintenance and rehabilitation to preserve the land areas and channel configurations in the Delta.

- Enhance educational awareness of the benefits of an adaptive working landscapes approach to managing agricultural and habitat resources in the Delta.
- Explore options for balancing environmental mitigation with other land uses, including agriculture and flood protection.
- Explore options for land use practices (Best Management Practices) that reduce or reverse subsidence e.g., Sherman Island.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Apply for working landscapes grant to implement demonstration projects and educational awareness. | |
| Co-sponsor Lower Bypass Management Plan development with Yolo Basin Foundation. | |
| Provide input into development of Yolo Wildlife Area Management Plan by Dept. of Fish & Game. | |
| Participate in efforts to address invasive species issues. | |
| Participate in discussions to identify and recognize impacts / benefits / compensation costs associated with mitigation. | |

3. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Protect the Delta from excessive construction of utilities and infrastructure facilities, including those that support uses and development outside the Delta. Where construction of new utility and infrastructure facilities is appropriate, ensure the impacts of such new construction on the integrity of levees, wildlife, and agriculture are minimized.

- Pursue sources of reference relative to transportation related issues in the Delta.
- Consider long-term impact mitigation opportunities.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Pursue authority to include a member with transportation expertise on the Commission. | |

4. LAND USE

Goals: Protect the unique character and qualities of the Primary Zone by preserving the cultural heritage and strong agricultural base of the Primary Zone. Direct new residential, commercial, and industrial development within the existing communities as currently designated and where appropriate services are available.

- Develop tools for establishing a baseline for resources in the Primary Zone.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Actively participate in the Administration's Delta Vision process. | |
| Pursue partners to evaluate potential establishment of Delta conservation easement program. | |
| Pursue development of a metes and bounds description for the Primary Zone boundary. | |
| Work with Dept. of Fish and Game to enhance Delta-wide GIS reference sources. | |

5. AGRICULTURE

Goal: Support long-term viability of commercial agriculture and discourage inappropriate development of agricultural lands.

- Establish forum for Delta-wide collaboration among agricultural interests on common activities and issues.
- Establish a program for Delta agricultural easements.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Meet routinely with Ag Commissioners, Farm Bureau and Resource Conservations District representatives to identify Delta-wide issues. | |
| Develop and implement Delta-wide rodent control program as it relates to levee maintenance. | |
| Identify strategies and components of a voluntary agricultural easement program, including exploration of incentives. | |
| Support the California Delta Resource Conservation & Development Council. | |

6. WATER

Goal: Protect long-term water quality in the Delta for agriculture, municipal, industrial, water-contact recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat uses, as well as all other designated beneficial uses.

- Develop programs for Delta-wide collaboration to effectively and efficiently address water quality issues including salinity intrusion.
- Participate in data collection/monitoring programs relative to salinity (X2).

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Facilitate collaborative to work with Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to “effectively” establish mandated Mercury TMDL program. | |
| Support solicitation of funding for mercury monitoring through legislative opportunities and resource bonds. | |

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|--|--|
| Provide input into development of South Delta and North Delta Improvements Programs | |
| Participate in DWR/RWQCB discussions regarding Suisun Marsh salinity monitoring program (California Data Exchange Network), including identification of indicators and objectives. | |

7. RECREATION AND ACCESS

Goals: Promote continued recreational use of the land and waters of the Delta. Ensure that needed facilities that allow such uses are constructed, maintained, and supervised. Protect landowners from unauthorized recreational uses on private lands. Maximize dwindling public funds for recreation by promoting public-private partnerships and multiple use of Delta lands.

- Establish programs for recognition of the value of recreational access to appreciate the unique resources of the Delta.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Provide forum for stakeholder-driven development of Delta Trail. | |
| Facilitate development of Delta branding concept, including visitor center and Delta-wide signage that recognize the resources of the Delta, including the cultural / historical values. | |
| Seek funding for completion of Riparian / Terrestrial component of Recreation Master Plan Strategy | |

8. LEVEES

Goals: Support the improvement and long-term maintenance of Delta levees by coordinating permit reviews and guidelines for levee maintenance. Develop a long-term funding program for levee maintenance. Protect levees in emergency situations. Give levee rehabilitation and maintenance the priority over other uses of levee areas.

- Pursue efforts to enhance recognition of public health and safety as a priority.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|--|-------------------------|
| Provide input on infrastructure bond and legislation to express support for public health and safety projects. | |
| Support Delta Levees Subventions program. | |
| Support Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS). | |
| Support Long-Term Management Strategy (LTMS) for Dredging (re-use) and permit streamlining. | |
| Facilitate forums of discussion on Delta-wide emergency response and other hazard-related topics. | |

9. MARINE PATROL, BOATER EDUCATION, AND SAFETY PROGRAMS

Goals:

- Pursue opportunities for development of Delta-wide programs to enhance boater awareness and an appreciation for recreational boating.

| 2006 / 2007 Tasks | Quarterly Status |
|---|-------------------------|
| Facilitate forum for collaboratively addressing abandoned vessel issue with a Delta-wide approach. | |
| Support efforts to develop streamlined application process for grants relative to abandoned vessel removal. | |
| Facilitate pursuit of legislation to address “commercial” abandoned vessel issue. | |
| Provide forums of discussion on water conveyance proposals to assure boating perspective is represented. | |